Ads Say “Search” is Not the Answer – “Bing” is the Cure

Jessica Mintz, AP Technology Writer
SEATTLE (AP) — Microsoft Corp. is inventing a new malady for which its new Web search site, Bing, is the only cure.

That's the premise of the $100 million, four-month advertising campaign Microsoft hopes will turn Bing into a verb and give the software maker a fighting chance against search leader Google Inc. — unlike its last redesign, Live Search, which launched four years ago to such little fanfare that many Web surfers still don't know where to find it online.

In the first Bing ad, set to debut Wednesday night, Microsoft unveils "search overload" syndrome — the state of confusion brought on by search results that don't answer a user's question. The commercial starts with bleeps and blips and a montage of Web-video frivolity (think cat playing piano).

The chaotic footage and soundtrack give way to upbeat rock music and stock-footage-style shots of children happily using consumer electronics and adults making calculations, rehabilitating injuries and going places.

"It's time to Bing," the narrator concludes. When he says the word "Bing," his voice goes much, much higher. The current events scenes are intended to tie the idea of saving money during the recession to using the new search engine to find travel and shopping deals,” said Ty Montague, chief creative officer at JWT, the agency responsible for the TV ads.

"The world of excess is over," he said. "What people need is something that is more meaningful, gets to the point more quickly, gets them to what they want." Next week, Microsoft will switch to a humorous approach, launching four more ads showing people answering everyday questions with monotone streams of semi-related words — "search overload" personified, the company says. The ads, which call Bing a decision engine instead of a search engine, don't show off any of its new features. Microsoft is saving those details for an online campaign, which will include a two-hour stretch in which every ad on The New York Times' Web site is for Bing.

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